

Amendments to the Claims

Please amend claims 1, 7, 21-24, 26 and 28-31. Please cancel claim 6. The currently pending claims appear below.

1 1. (Currently Amended) A method of automating contributions in a gaming system, said
2 method comprising:

3 (a) prompting a user with a gaming option in an automated gaming system;

4 (b) enabling the user to make an optional pledge of a contribution to an organization, said
5 pledge being contingent on a ~~result~~ payout of said gaming option, said pledge being ~~input~~ inputted
6 to said automated gaming system;

7 (c) permitting the user to make a wager and partake in the gaming option in said
8 automated gaming system, said automated gaming system determining said ~~result~~ payout using
9 said wager and gaming option;

10 (d) automatically presenting said ~~result~~ payout to said user from said automated gaming
11 system, said step (d) being performed after said step (b); and

12 (e) if the user inputs said optional pledge to said automated gaming system responsive to
13 step (b), then automatically making the contribution to the organization based on the pledge of
14 step (b) and said ~~result~~ payout.

1 2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein step (b) further comprises allowing the user to
2 select the organization.

1 3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein step (b) further comprises allowing the user to
2 select a size of the contribution.

1 4. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the gaming option has a first odds of winning
2 in step (a), and a second odds of winning based on the pledge of step (b).

3 5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein an odds of winning the gaming option is
4 related to the pledge of step (b).

6. (Cancelled)

1 7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein a potential payout for winning the
2 ~~gaming option~~ game is related to the pledge of step (b).

1 8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of accumulating
2 contributions for the user during a series of gaming activities.

1 9. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of automatically providing
2 information regarding the gaming option and the contribution to the Internal Revenue Service.

10-20. (Cancelled)

1 21. (Currently Amended) An automated gaming apparatus, comprising:

2 at least one user input device which receives input selections from a user;

3 at least one user output device which provides information to said user;

4 a controller coupled to said at least one user input device and said at least one user output
5 device, said controller controlling the operation of said automated gaming apparatus, said
6 controller executing the steps comprising:

7 receiving a selection from a user using said at least one user input device to engage in a
8 gaming activity;

9 allowing said user to make an optional user pledge of a contribution to an organization
10 using said at least one user input device, said user pledge being contingent on a result payout of
11 said gaming activity;

12 determining ~~user proceeds~~ said payout of said gaming activity ~~based on said result~~;

13 presenting said result payout of said gaming activity to said user at said at least one user
14 output device, said presenting step being performed after said step of allowing a user to make an
15 optional user pledge;

16 if a user makes said optional user pledge, determining whether said result payout satisfies
17 the contingency of said user pledge; and

18 if a user makes said optional user pledge and if said result payout of said gaming activity
19 satisfies the contingency of said optional user pledge, reducing ~~said net~~ user proceeds from said
20 payout by an amount of said user pledge, and crediting said organization with said amount of said
21 user pledge.

1 22. (Currently Amended) The gaming apparatus of claim 21, wherein said controller further
2 executes the step of:

3 interactively prompting said user to make said optional user pledge to an organization
4 using said at least one user output device, said step of interactively prompting being performed
5 before said step of presenting said result payout of said gaming activity.

6 23. (Currently Amended) The gaming apparatus of claim 21, wherein said controller further
7 executes the step of:
8 automatically determining said ~~result~~ payout based on a random process.

1 24. (Currently Amended) The gaming apparatus of claim 23, wherein at least one of (a) a
2 probability that said ~~result~~ payout will be favorable to said user, and (b) the amount of ~~said~~ user
3 proceeds in the event said ~~result~~ payout is favorable to said user, are dependent on whether said
4 user makes said optional user pledge.

1 25. (Previously Presented) The gaming apparatus of claim 21, wherein said step of allowing
2 said user to make an optional user pledge comprises allowing said user to select an organization
3 to receive said pledge.

1 26. (Currently Amended) The gaming apparatus of claim 21, wherein said controller further
2 executes the step of:
3 automatically providing information regarding ~~said~~ user proceeds of said payout and the
4 amount credited to said organization to the Internal Revenue Service.

1 27. (Previously Presented) The gaming apparatus of claim 21, wherein said at least one user
2 output device and said at least one user input device comprises an interactive visual display
3 terminal.

1 28. (Currently Amended) A program product for use in an automated gaming apparatus
2 having at least one user input device and at least one user output device, comprising:
3 a plurality of processor-executable instructions recorded on signal-bearing media, wherein
4 said instructions, when executed by at least one processor of said automated gaming apparatus,
5 cause the apparatus to perform the steps comprising:
6 receiving a selection from a user to engage in a gaming activity;
7 allowing said user to make an optional user pledge of a contribution to an organization
8 using said at least one user input device, said user pledge being contingent on a result payout of
9 said gaming activity;
10 determining ~~user proceeds~~ said payout of said gaming activity ~~based on said result~~;
11 presenting said result payout of said gaming activity to said user at said at least one user
12 output device, said presenting step being performed after said step of allowing a user to make an
13 optional user pledge;
14 if a user makes said optional user pledge, determining whether said result payout satisfies
15 the contingency of said user pledge; and
16 if a user makes said optional user pledge and if said result payout of said gaming activity
17 satisfies the contingency of said optional user pledge, reducing ~~said net~~ user proceeds from said
18 payout by an amount of said user pledge, and crediting said organization with said amount of said
19 user pledge.

1 29. (Currently Amended) The program product of claim 28, wherein said instructions further
2 cause said apparatus to perform the step of:
3 interactively prompting said user to make said optional user pledge to an organization
4 using an interactive display device, said step of interactively prompting being performed before
5 said step of presenting said result payout of said gaming activity.

1 30. (Currently Amended) The program product claim 28, wherein said instructions further
2 cause said apparatus to perform the step of:

3 automatically determining said ~~result~~ payout based on a random process;

4 wherein at least one of (a) a probability that said ~~result~~ payout will be favorable to said
5 user, and (b) the amount of ~~said~~ user proceeds in the event said ~~result~~ payout is favorable to said
6 user, are dependent on whether said user makes said optional user pledge.

1 31. (Currently Amended) The program product of claim 28, wherein said instructions further
2 cause said apparatus to perform the step of:

3 automatically providing information regarding ~~said~~ user proceeds of said payout and the
4 amount credited to said organization to the Internal Revenue Service.